

BENZONIA TOWNSHIP BOARD

Approved as amended

REGULAR MEETING

October 8th, 2025

Meeting called to order by Supervisor Barnard at 3:00 PM.

Present: Barnard, Rose, Orr and Heller

Absent: Burns

Staff: Haase, Adams, Nye, Pitcher

Absent: Hall

Guests: 10

Supervisor led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Motion by Rose to approve the agenda, Heller seconded. All ayes, motion carried.

Motion by Rose to approve the minutes as presented from the regular meeting September 10th, 2025, Heller second, discussion had, roll call vote taken, Orr-N, Barnard-Y, Heller-Y, Rose-Y, motion carried 3:1.

TREASURERS REPORT: A written treasurers report for September 2025 was received.

CLERKS'S REPORT: The Clerk presented the Profit and Loss statement for the General and Fire Department accounts along with a list of the payables for September 2025. Discussion was held. Roll call vote taken to approve the bills. Orr-N, Barnard-Y, Heller-Y, Rose-Y, motion carried 3:1. The clerk stated election prep is underway. She read the list of election workers and announced the public accuracy test is October 14th @ 11am.

SUPERVISOR'S REPORT: Barnard read a "memorandum of Understanding" from the Village of Beulah asking the Township to contribute to the stormwater improvement project, a one-time amount of \$10,000. Lake and Crystal Lake Twps both provided \$10,000 towards the project.

Rose made a motion to provide \$10,000 towards the storm water project. Orr seconded. Roll call vote take, all ayes, motion carried. We are in the new building. A public open house is planned for October 24th from 3-6pm. The park signs with open and closed times are installed. The in memory of signs are being replaced, work being done by the students at the North Ed Career Tech center. The website is coming along, a couple interviews need to be completed and a few forms and documents updated. Barnard estimates we should be ready to go live in a

couple weeks. The .gov extension is still being worked on and is not ready yet. The appraisal we purchased was received. The value of the old building was placed at \$345,000. The Benzie Conservation District resubmitted their offer for \$325,000. Doug Taylor has offered to drop his transaction fee to 1%. The Point-of-Sale septic report was received and per the Benzie Health Department the septic is undersized for any high traffic or large water usage business. This will limit the types of businesses that could occupy the buildings as they currently exist. There was discussion had, **including Orrs' suggestion to split the difference in the appraisals**. Rose made a motion to counter at \$347,400, Heller second the motion, roll call vote taken, all ayes, motion carried.

STAFF REPORTS:

1. FIRE CHIEF: Chief Adams stated there were 14 fire and 39 medical calls. 53 total calls for September and 504 YTD. The Firefighter association worked the Ironman competition in September. Our twp had several volunteers participate. The fire department will be hosting a Trunk or Treat and open house October 31, 2025 from 5-8pm at the new building. Chief plans to attend the Benzie Co career fair at Crystal Mountain on October 30th. Chris Parrish from Benzie County EMS gave us an update for the year in progress and answered questions.
2. Commissioners Report: Nye reported info from the September 23rd commissioner meeting. The register of Deeds stated that 10 acres is selling in the range of \$100-120,000. They are also putting on a fraud seminar highlighting a fraud alert program to help protect you from real estate scams. The berm at the Veterans memorial park is being removed for easier maintenance. Tim Malone from Cherry Capital Communications says the grant programs have changed so the scope of the fiber for all has changed. He states are that 90% of homes will have access to fiber for internet. The county is reviewing the plans for a county owned properties ordinance. Several commissioners attended the MAC conference. The Parks and Rec committee has a grant for the outlet property. Discussions had regarding the outlet improvements such as carry in launch, bathrooms, viewing platform etc. Funds have been ~~concerned~~ **secured**, plans are drawn, a public feedback meeting was held. There were concerns of maintenance, disruption of the vegetation and wetlands along with good comments as well. The Inland Twp commissioner has submitted their resignation, the county has 30 days to receive applicants for appointment. The interim will have to run in the next election to stay in the position.
3. Zoning Administrator: The zoning ordinance rewrite stakeholder meeting held the 25th of September. Next stakeholder meeting October 16th 2025. Planning commission meeting being held October 9th 2025 at 6pm.

BRIEF PUBLIC COMMENT: 2 residents made public comments.

COMMUNICATION: **Reminder to schedule use of the building with Diana, so rooms are not double booked.**

PENDING BUSINESS: A/V for new building- the third company declined submitting a bid. Orr will try to compare the 2 bids better to see if apples to apples due to price difference, before getting 3rd bid. Appraisal update – see supervisors report. Website update – see supervisor report. Park signs- See supervisors report. Policy book -no progress. Regarding the Mollineaux Rd paving bill from the BCRC, Barnard started the discussion as to whether to pay or not. Discussion had as to why it happened and Barnard had conversations with Troy at BCRC as to not having this happen again. **Rose made motion to pay BCRC \$24,711.07 for the paving of Mollineaux Rd, Barnard supported, more discussion held, roll call vote taken, all ayes, motion carried.**

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

- Cemetery: No report.
- Parks: Met last week, Jeff Louwsma talked about moving some tee boxes so in line with the walking trail. He will submit a plan. Rich Gottardo stated there is enough material to do one more ballfield rehab. Caleb Luibrand is working on dugout repairs and maintenance. Jim Gillison still working on a pickleball court plan. Park water will be shut off near end of October.
- Building and Grounds: No report.
- Fire Department: No report.
- Township Roads: No report.
- Community Activities: Open house October 24th 3-6pm.
- Finance: No report
- Personnel: No report
- Policy: No report
- ZBA: No report
- Blight: Pitcher gave update on the 3 current cases; 1) The Bolton case hearing scheduled was postponed new date undetermined. Suggests soliciting bids once hearing is held. 2) Narrowgauge is now owned by Eric Hunt again, cleanup is in progress but will be slow progress due to availability. 3) Eldridge Rd has had progress, no more recent work, no fines been issued yet but is possible next course.

NEW BUSINESS: The stakeholder committee meeting was the initial group, only meeting to get acquainted with each other and get on the same page. A summary will be submitted to the planning commission. Orr questioned the issues with the website. Barnard summarized them and are in process to remedy.

EXTENDED PUBLIC COMMENT: Additional public comment received.

Supervisor adjourned the meeting at 4:49 P.M.

Submitted by:

Diana L. Heller, Clerk

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ Motion passed to contribute \$10,000 to the Beulah Storm Water project.
- ❖ Motion passed to make a counter offer to the Benzie Conservation District.
- ❖ Motion passed to pay BCRC for Mollineaux Rd paving.